

**Metropolitan Transportation Commission
Community Focus Group: Chinatown Community Development Corporation
Held at the Manilatown I-Hotel
San Francisco, California
May 31, 2008**

Maintenance Investment Category

Question 1

1. Which of the following strategies should be a higher priority?	
A. Spending transportation funds to maintain the existing system of roads and the existing bus, rail and ferry services in the region	8
B. Spending transportation funds to build new roads and add more bus, rail and ferry services in the region	4

A: maintain the existing system of roads and the existing bus, rail and ferry services

- Hard enough to maintain what we have now. Would love to have more, but how are you going to pay for it? That's the problem in general – we get transportation projects done and then no one maintains them.
- If you cannot maintain the existing system, how can you be having new roads and new things?
- I'm very familiar with Muni – congestion can be caused by potholes. Relieve congestion if we maintain the roads. Buses wouldn't have to slow down – might catch the next light. Within a 3-4 block radius in the City you'll find a bus, but if buses are better maintained you could have more buses running.
- Good to maintain current Muni buses and improve system. Things that hang down and people grab* – shorter people not able to grab those – very dangerous if bus comes to sudden stop. Need to maintain and improve as well – improve on little things. (*Need height adjustment for hand holders)

B: build new roads and add more bus, rail and ferry services

- It's a difficult question because maintenance is under funded, especially Muni and BART. But in SF maintenance is a priority already, but other parts of the Bay Area need to get to a higher level of transit service around the Bay Area. Need to be easy for anyone in the Bay Area to take transit anywhere. Need to reach a level where there's more people riding transit – need to reach a more sustainable level of transit service.
- I work in San Bruno – the bus so crowded and congested. I'm often not able to get on the bus (Muni). Would like to see bus lines increased – need more buses. Every day from SF Chinatown it's impossible to get on the bus.
- Good to maintain, but that's not enough. Wants to build new roads and build up more service. Mentioned Hong Kong – very proud of their transit – can watch TV on the bus in Hong Kong.

Question 2

2. How much of the \$30 billion dollar budget should be spent on maintaining local streets and roads, state highways, and public transit systems?	
A. Up to 25% (\$7.5 billion)	1
B. Up to 50% (\$15 billion)	7
C. Up to 75% (\$22.5 billion)	3
D. 100% (\$30 billion)	1

B: Up to 50% (\$15 billion)

- He felt both A & B were important in previous question, so 50/50 makes sense. Need to think about East Bay and South Bay – buses only come once every hour. While maintenance is important, need to increase frequency throughout the entire Bay Area.
- Never going to be a point where there's enough money for maintenance. Cut your losses and focus on improving service elsewhere.
- Does maintenance include traffic lights? (MTC staff said maintaining them, yes) On Filbert close to Mason, there are no traffic lights – it is very dangerous. So we need lights for safety. It has to do with installation of new traffic lights. Also there will be more people and increasing population – need to go with the flow of the need.

C: Up to 75% (\$22.5 billion)

- Over 25 years that's less than a billion a year. Can use more money to maintain roads, but wants some new projects as well.
- I feel besides maintaining current system, there still needs to be more and new buses. It takes a long time to pick up kids, etc. Increase number of buses – also supports the statement of more traffic lights for safety.

D: 100% (\$30 billion)

- Wants to fully utilize the money – doesn't want to waste what we already have.

Question 3

3. If you didn't spend all \$30 billion dollars on maintenance projects, where would you spend the rest of the funds?

Put it towards an increase in salary for drivers – more money = better attitudes

I agree – in Chinatown there are a lot of elderly and small kids – bus drivers drive off before they can even get on the bus.

I feel regardless how much the bus driver salary is, there should be good service and good attitude of the driver. Need to give people time to get on the bus. Money doesn't matter. I chose B earlier – need to install new traffic lights, yes. But even with all that, remaining funds should go towards training of drivers so they understand how to handle incidents and provide good service, and so they can be better prepared. In addition, training needs to include reminders of incidents and accidents that have happened and how to avoid in future (fatigue, not being alert, blind spots, watching for pedestrians). Drivers need to be more aware and alert.

Would use the remaining 50% for expansion. Bay Area's population pattern is increasing in the East Bay. Definitely need more bus lines there. Need more frequent service. At the same time, they should do surveys related to changing population patterns – this would help inform future traffic patterns.

Add more frequency, and increase number of bus lines out in the East Bay. Also reconfigure roads and streets to make them more focused on transit (dedicated bus lanes, BRT lines, priority signaling, more bike lanes).

Invest in new technology to better manage the system we have. Study other countries' systems and how they use technology to possibly implement their stuff here. Need more change and better utilization of what we have. Reevaluate what's out there for potential change and improvement of traffic flow.

I also chose B previously. The remainder should be used for emergency situations – like parades in SF (tend to block everything). Is it possible to have an overpass over Market Street?

Definitely should do some comparisons (Seoul, Taipei, Hong Kong, Japan). Need to overhaul BART – we don't know what stop we're on. Why not a digital map on the train? There needs to be indicators on the trains – electronic signs that light up and tell you where you are.

BART service is important to discuss. Need to have an open mind towards other systems that are working. We need to improve our systems here. Also feel strongly about drivers – don't need to pay them more. Maybe give drivers a demotion if they're not doing a good job with a good attitude. If drivers don't have that attitude, perhaps they should seek other employment.

Congestion Relief Investment Category

Question 4

4. Which of the following projects should be a higher investment priority for the region's transportation system?	
A. Spending transportation funds on the highway system to relieve traffic congestion, including ramp metering, high-occupancy toll lanes, etc.	3
B. Spending transportation funds on public transit options, including rail and buses to provide alternatives to driving	8
C. Spending transportation funds on walking paths and bicycle lanes to provide alternatives to driving	1

A: Spending transportation funds on the highway system ...

- Keep traffic moving and that will benefit buses as well.
- Agree, also in the City the traffic lights change fast. Would like better signal timing. And, if the roads are less congested, drivers might be a little more relaxed. There's a big pressure for drivers to get somewhere on time – less cars on the road will relax everyone, including bus/transit drivers. And maybe not increase salaries (she changed her mind), but give rewards to good drivers (instead of scolding those who are bad).

B: Spending transportation funds on public transit options ...

- Having more Muni and increasing the number of buses. Will cut down on the time people wait to get on the bus (sometimes longer than 20 minutes).
- I'm for increasing the number of buses because there was a time when the bus took half an hour and was completely packed when it arrived and didn't even stop. We need more buses. Besides, most people don't want to drive in SF – people want to ride on public transit, so we need more frequent service.
- No matter how many improvements we make to the road system, it will be more attractive to drive which will make more people drive. If you make transit more attractive, people will take transit, which will also get people off the road and driving less.
- Also better for the environment (help reduce emissions).
- Convince more people to ride public transit and we can get people off the roads. Need to improve efficiency and frequency of transit. Some people need to drive, though, so improving public transit would help both systems.

C: Spending transportation funds on walking paths and bicycle lanes ...

- Within SF the roads are very congested; also would be good to have bike paths for cyclists – it's very dangerous to ride in SF – would be good and safer to have better bike paths.

Question 5

5. What's the one improvement that could be made to public transportation that would increase ridership?
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Efficiency – come more frequently and on time.

Make mass transit available in Chinatown

Reliability – being on time. Management of systems need to get out and take the transit system to see first-hand what the problems are. (They all take their cars because they know the transit system is unreliable – this was said by a transit driver manager.)

Funds should be spent on building overpasses for pedestrians. Will cause less stops for pedestrians at intersections and will improve traffic as well. SF is a very cosmopolitan city – why so few progressive improvements like overpasses? There would also be fewer pedestrian accidents.

For major streets in the City, maybe install overpasses, but also use the option for underpasses as well.

In the East Bay – public transit costs more and is slower to get back to SF. Need to increase efficiency. Also with bridges and driving, can't beat BART, so it makes sense to improve the system for more people to take it.

Question 6

6. Which of the following should be a higher priority?	
A. Providing more transportation funds to communities that are planning to build more housing along BART and other public transit lines	11
B. Providing transportation funds evenly to communities regardless of where they are planning to build homes	1

A: Providing more transportation funds to communities that are planning to build more housing ...

- More reasonable because people will take public transit if we spend more money in this area – can reduce congestion as well.
- I have friends who have said that if certain part of City or certain towns had more public transit they would live there.
- All the towns are going to grow, if they're close to transit or not. Focus on TOD, but make new transit lines that will serve more people (places that don't have any transit lines should get some of this money, too, if they're building TODs).
- Leaning towards A because if BART or bus stations are next to new development, more white collar workers take transit. Some stations and lines in SF have changed completely because of this. Also in Dublin, Pleasanton, WC, if they were within a three or five-block radius and people felt safe, they would just walk and take transit.
- Suggested having developers work with transit agencies to encourage public transit use. Needs to happen more.

Question 7

7. Do you agree or disagree with this statement: “There should be a subsidy for low-income riders.”	
A. Strongly Agree	4
B. Agree	3
C. Neutral	2
D. Disagree	3

E. Strongly Disagree	0
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Strongly Agree/Agree

- Low-income individuals that get a monthly pass – it would be good to subsidize that expense
- I agree because the fast pass amount has gone up making it even harder to afford
- Especially as an assistance for low-income families
- New immigrant families need to ride public transit and can't afford it, so I choose A
- Feel low-income do need to be able to pay to ride – fast pass and discount systems do help people. Also people need to be able to use BART too, so that would help there. (However, the middle class is shrinking, and yet is struggling to pay all their bills, so this is a tough call.)

Strongly Disagree/Disagree

- Think it should be affordable to everybody in the first place. Shouldn't have to have a subsidy. Would allow low-income people to ride, but would also be an incentive to others to ride if it were cheaper than driving. Everybody would have an interest in riding and keeping it clean.
- Minimum wage workers – those people need to be able to pay bus fare. Hard to identify low-income families (and sometimes those people live better than the rest of us). They should pay the actual fare.
- Low-income families already get govt. assistance in other ways. To give more is not necessary.

Neutral

- If you can find a plan to convince more riders and a more efficient way of collecting fees and stopping the inflation of prices, it should be more affordable to everybody. Might not need to subsidize.
- Who subsidizes? Who pays for that? And how much does would it cost in administrative costs to save 5\$? Is it worth it?

Question 8

8. Do you agree or disagree with this statement: <i>"I favor basing all transit fare subsidies on income rather than age or disability."</i>	
A. Strongly Agree	1
B. Agree	4
C. Neutral	2
D. Disagree	3
E. Strongly Disagree	1

Strongly Agree/Agree

Agree that the fare should be reduced for those who qualify (not so much of a subsidy). For seniors and students (who are supported by their families), it's good to have a lower fare. For new immigrants, they should have a one-year period of a discount. But beyond that year, no discount.

Strongly Disagree/Disagree

If we're going to start doing subsidies for low-income, it's going to increase paperwork and create more overhead. Also might be a legal issue to affect people's status in the country if they have to give all their information to get the discount. Should maintain the senior discount because those people generally make less money. Likes the current system.

Question 9

9. Which of the following should be a higher priority?	
A. Reducing tailpipe emissions and encouraging alternatives to driving, such as public transit, bicycling, walking, etc.	8
B. Reducing traffic congestion and improving traffic flow to make it easier to drive around the Bay Area	3

A: Reducing tailpipe emissions and encouraging alternatives to driving

- Good for the environment and good for your health.
- By riding public transit or walking/biking we will reduce emissions. Don't intend to be driving to LA – go by other means.
- B is self-defeating. If you make it easier to drive, people are going to drive.

B: Reducing traffic congestion and improving traffic flow

- I support improving the environment. But I live in San Pablo. It's 19 miles to SF and I don't know how I can do it. Walking doesn't work and it's better that I drive.
- I feel to maintain financial prosperity of the City (not only the residents, but others who visit the City), it's more convenient for those people who don't live here but spend here and come here to drive.

Question 10

10. Which programs do you think are most effective to reduce the amount of emissions? (Select as many as you think will reduce emissions.)	
A. Subsidize purchase of newer/cleaner vehicles	5
B. Provide more/cheaper public transit	8
C. Develop awareness campaign to encourage people to reduce fossil fuel use	6
D. Build more bike paths and sidewalks	4
E. Funding incentives to cities to allow more development near transit	6
F. Support local traffic signal timing coordination	3

B and C – Would be practical to improve current public transportation system; would also be good to have publications and media to educate the public.

A – Feel it's unlikely we'll have fewer cars, so it would be good to have cleaner cars.

D & E – Concerned about the environment (and improved health); also new development plans would be good to reward and give an incentive to people who use public transit

B through E – with C would have to change the mindset of people who don't use public transportation

Chose them all – it's becoming more impossible to get around via car, need to have alternatives; needs to be a transition period, though – giving incentives is good; and good to give people time to head towards using transit more

Question 11

11. How much of the \$30 billion dollar budget should be spent on maintaining local streets and roads, state highways, and public transit systems?	
A. Up to 25% (\$7.5 billion)	0

B. Up to 50% (\$15 billion)	9
C. Up to 75% (\$22.5 billion)	2
D. 100% (\$30 billion)	0

No one changed his/her mind.

Question 12

12. Thinking ahead to the year 2035, if you had \$30 billion, how much would you spend on each of the following projects to prepare for our regional transportation needs? To make it simpler, let's change the \$30 billion to \$30. Out of the \$30, please fill in the dollar amount you would spend for each area.	
A. Maintenance of existing roads and systems	\$71
B. Relief of traffic congestion	\$114
C. Provide transportation funds to cities that develop housing near transit	\$64
D. Provide access to public transit systems for all Bay Area residents	\$69
E. Reducing automobile emissions	\$72

- Put all the money on B – if there is no traffic congestion you'll solve a lot of problems
- I would put the majority of the money on B and E – with those accomplished, you would solve the rest of the problems
- Maintain and provide access to everybody

Question 13

13. Now that we've done the budget, would you favor pursuing new revenues to increase the funding?	
A. Yes	12
B. No	0

Question 14

14. Which of the following new revenue sources would you support? (Multiple answers are okay.)	
A. Regional gas fee	5
B. Higher bridge toll	2
C. Road tolls	4
D. Vehicle registration fees	9
E. County transportation sales taxes	4
F. Other new revenues	2
G. No new fees or increases	0

- Said A and C, but would focus on single-passenger cars on routes that are already serviced by transit routes (but maybe not bridge tolls because not everybody has options there)
- Chose D (if you have a vehicle you should pay more) and E (everyone would pay evenly)

- A, D, and E – If someone wants to have a car, they should think about this; if the expense is too much perhaps they would re-think and not buy a car
- Like the idea of a transit district pass – people who live closer to transit would have to pay an extra fee into the system (a flat tax that goes into a fund).
- One variation on that would be to tax everyone in congested areas who drive a car in those areas